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MEMORIAL VERSES,
BY
J. BURGESS.



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Yours Truly
J. Burges.



“In Memory of My Wife,”

A VOLUME OF

AMATORY AND ELEGIAC VERSE,

BY

JOSEPH BURGESS.



1875.

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PREFACE.



It is not usual for the preface of a book to be written by any other pen than that of its author during his lifetime, but it is the wish of Mr. Burgess that the reference to the sad story of his brief married life should be told by one of his friends, and as many of the following poems originally appeared in the *Oldham Chronicle*, it was perhaps natural that the task should be deputed to its Editor. The volume consists of pieces written by Mr. Burgess to his late wife previous to their marriage, suggested by their union, or by her death.

The story is a mournful one. Within one short month of their nuptials, the bride lay in her shroud, and the bridegroom, returning from his work on Christmas eve, glad at the prospect of a short holiday, only learned of the real danger of his wife just in time to witness her departure for the spirit-land, for which she was eminently prepared by her life of faith and purity in this world. For several winters before her death her health had been delicate, but not so as to cause any serious apprehensions, certainly not to justify the suspicion that consumption—the stern foe of a temperament which so often blooms into intellectual, spiritual, and physical beauty—had marked

her as its prey. The reader will remember how severe the recent winter was, especially about the close of the year, and how many people of all ages had not sufficient vital force to brave it. Mrs. Burgess was one of these. She was not in strong health at the time of her marriage, but this was attributed partly to the recent death of an infant brother to whom she was very tenderly attached. The date of the ceremony had then been fixed, and as it had been postponed once before, the medical attendant strongly advised that it should not again be deferred.


The marriage took place on the 26th of November, and she died on the 24th of December. As the present volume is strictly a memorial of her, many poems written by Mr. Burgess do not here find a place. He is a young man, having at the present time only just completed his 21st year. He is now, as he has ever been, a factory operative, who has had no more educational advantages than those common to his class; but it is not on that, or on any other ground that critical leniency is demanded. Mr. Burgess is well aware that when a man gives to the world the results of his mental efforts, he has no claim to favours, but must abide by a verdict based solely on the merits or demerits of his work, altogether irrespective of what may be considered adverse circumstances. It is to such a judgment that he appeals, not arrogantly, but with becoming modesty.

J. HIRST.

Chronicle Office,

April 14th, 1873

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ERRATA.—Page 35, line 13, read for “ Neaw l aw’m a married mon,” “ Neaw aw’m a married mon.” Page 36, line 4, for “ happens,” read “ happen.” Page 36, line 9, for “ cooms,” read “ coams;” also in line 10 of the same page. Page 37, line 9, for “ coom,” read “ coam.” Page 38, line 8, for “ gan,” read “ gun.” Page 76, line 13, for “ roit,” read “ riot.”

DEDICATION.

TO THE PERPETUATION OF MY WIFE'S
MEMORY THIS LITTLE BOOK IS SOLEMNLY
DEDICATED.



A VALENTINE.

FOUND AMONGST MY WIFE'S LETTERS.

I.



AS thou art far above the crowd
Who at Love's mimic shrines are bowed,
And think a lover dull and stupid
Unless he swears to them by Cupid ;
To thee no tinselled toy I send,
But rather would my love commend,
With honest heartfelt words of truth,
Words pure and blameless as thy youth.

II.

And, therefore, thou mayest gather hence
I compliment thy common sense,
In thinking that, though unperfumed,
My tribute is not coldly doomed
To be condemned and cast aside,
Because it panders not to pride ;
A thought which makes me proud to sign
Myself “ Thy would-be Valentine.”

III.

If sighs were zephyrs of perfume,
And tears these pages could illumine,
No gem of the designer's art
Would smell as sweet or look as smart ;
But from the sighs my bosom heaves
The page no odorous breath receives,
And if a tear drops now and then,
It only blurs the words I pen.

IV.

A love more passionate than mine
Cannot be human, 'tis divine ;
And shall I have to sue in vain,
Meeting with coldness and disdain ?
Ah ! surely not, for who could prove
Indifferent to such earnest love.
While I am young, and thou art fair,
In mercy hearken to my prayer.

V.

And then, as we grow old in life,
I'll sing the praises of my wife,
Until a hushed and listening earth
Has learned the story of thy worth,
And for a wreath to crown thy head,
Long after we are with the dead,
Bright flowers of poetry entwine,
If I may be thy Valentine.



WHAT IS MORE SWEET?

I.



WHAT is more sweet—when the queen of the
night

Hangs her lamp in the tent up above us,
And the stars are all bright with their phosphorent
light,
And the winds seem to whisper they love us,
And the dew hangs like glass on the carpet of
grass,
That our merciful Father hath spread us—
Than to saunter with Jane through the hawthorn-
hedged lane,
In the midst of the cornfields and meadows ;

II.

When the flowery scent with each zephyr is blent,

And begins the wee nightingale's warble ;

When the stars that are seen in the train of their
queen

Gleam like diamonds embedded in marble,

And to deepen the charm she hangs on my arm,

Affectionate glances returning ;

What is more sweet than the heavenly heat

Of the love that within me is burning.





THE MYSTERY OF LOVE.

I.

BENEATH a mighty oak tree's shade,
Upon a mossy seat,
I sat conversing with a maid,
Watching the shadows which inlaid
A brooklet at my feet.

II.

As there we sat beneath the oak—
This pretty maid and I—
Of Love's mysterious power we spoke ;
For we were both beneath his yoke,
Yet knew no reason why.

III.

That she was fair, and I was young,
Was all I knew about it ;
Therefore I asked her whence it sprung,
Hoping an answer from her tongue ;
But had to do without it.

IV.

“ Take you no trouble on that head,
While it remains unbounded : ”
These were the words my darling said,
And still the riddle is unread
Which I to her propounded.





BEAUTY AND VIRTUE.

TWO SONNETS.

I.

BEAUTY is like the ever-changing moon,
As seldom noticed till she waxes full,
And, to her fair possessor's grief, as soon
Despised when she commences waning dull.
But Virtue, like the sun, withheld whose ray,
We see in Beauty nothing to admire,
Though she may call our passions into play,
And rouse the sinful lust of young desire ;
None of her votaries ever give the heart
Unto the fair provoker of their lust,
None weep when Death transfixes with his dart,
And dooms her body to congenial dust ;

She may be more attractive to the gaze,
But Virtue only can affection raise.

II.

Although more valued when it is enshrined

 Within a casket Nature has not marred,
The mind alone affects another's mind,

 The mind alone is what the good regard.
Its residence may be too mean for show,

 But if there Virtue has been given birth,
She causes every heart around to glow,

 (As the beclouded sun rays warm the earth,)
Until the seeds of Love are fructified,

 And flowers appear of such a healthy bloom,
Even by Death they cannot be destroyed,

 But flourish in the precincts of the tomb.
Both of these attributes to her belong
Who crowns my prospect, and inspires my song.



THE SUN AND THE SKY.

THREE SONNETS.

I.

THIS bride, the sky, bewails her lot of sorrow,
When from her range of vision sinks the
sun ;

And by his promise, "I'll return to-morrow,"

Is not to calmer resignation won ;

But still allows tears on her cheeks to glisten,

Seen through the meshes of her cloudy veil,

While gentle sighs, to all who care to listen,

Relate a sad and melancholy tale.

How worse her state, who sees by clouds of sickness,

The light eclipsed on which she loved to gaze,

When Faith's strong eye is baffled by their thickness,
And Hope refuses comfort with her rays :
Her dream of joy is prematurely blighted,
Her journey but half done, and she benighted.

II.

Our nights of sorrow make our days of gladness
More happy still, by adding to our joy
That zest which he who has not tasted sadness
May offer all his wealth in vain to buy.
For see, the sun his nightly voyage endeth,
And he returns—the sky's tears drives away—
His glorious brightness with her beauty blendeth.
And makes her happy for another day.
How happier then the maid, who sees dividing
The clouds she thought would part on earth no
more,

And, from affliction it was purified in,
Her star emerging brighter than before :
Had but her happiness as long duration,
Heaven's joys would pall in human estimation.

III.

The sky, when jealous of the eyes of mortals,
And wishing to enjoy alone Sol's sheen,
Hangs darksome clouds, through whose wide-sever'd
portals
But casually a ray of light is seen ;
If men complain aloud, her deed upbraiding,
What recks she for the tenour of their cry,
Since the same clouds, which from the earth are
shading
His beams, enhance their brightness in her eye ?
And so, when smiles upon the faithful lover
The eye which Death has striven in vain to close,

'Tis seldom she will willingly discover
To others all the happiness she knows,
Or cares to satisfy their curiosity,
Who call her heartless—dub her a monstrosity.





MY LOVE IS NOT AN ANGEL.

I.

MY love is not an angel, for
She has not shining wings,
A crown upon her forehead, nor
A harp with golden strings ;
But if e'er woman lived below
As angels live above,
Her beauty and her virtues show
That woman is my love.

II.

I know 'tis idle to attempt
To paint her portrait true ;
And, therefore, have not even dreamt
Of doing so for you ;
Because the best description given
Would be as sure to fail
As men's imaginings of heaven
Before the truth turn pale.

III.

And yet a word of praise
In hackneyed terms allow—
(Since who in amatory lays
Can be orig'nal now ?)
For oh ! the passion has been pent
Within my soul so long,
That it is forced to find a vent,
And find that vent in song.

IV.

In her the choicest gifts I find
That ever maids have graced,
Since first the model of their kind
In Paradise was placed ;
And this is not an idle boast,
For I would scorn to say
December, sheeted like a ghost,
Has all the charms of May.

V.

Her cheeks are lightly tinged with red,
Like lilies, when they blush
To see bent o'er their virgin bed
A sunlit, rose-hung bush ;
And being not too deeply dyed,
The colour comes and goes—
Now blanching like the valley's pride,
Now blushing like the rose.

VI.

Her smile is like the break of day
Upon an autumn morn,
When all the trees with fruit are gay,
And all the hills with corn ;
And when its ray upon me falls,
I feel compelled to sing,
As loudly as the throstle calls
Unto his mate in spring.

VII.

When, as into her face I look,
I say that in her eye—
Just like a shadow in a brook—
I see mine image lie.
She softly whispers in mine ear,
With lips that breathe a spell,
“ You occupy a place, my dear,
Within my heart as well.”

VIII.

Her cheeks then nestle close to mine,
Her lips to mine are pressed ;
Lips that are sweet as any vine
In all its glory dressed ;
And sweeter, for the vine is free
For all to cull who care,
While no one is allowed but me
To taste the vintage there.

IX.

Were I the monarch of the earth,
My first command had been,
“ Ye bards, sing of the beauty, worth,
And virtues of your queen :”
And what the laureates would for fee,
I will for love proclaim,
Perhaps in ruder minstrelsy,
But with a nobler aim,

X.

For such a happy swain am I,
 'Tis summer all the year,
And not a cloud obscures the sky,
 As far as I can peer.
Oh ! what a glorious world is ours
 To lovers, till they meet
The disappointing blight that sours
 The memory of the sweet.





LINES ON A RAINY SUNDAY.

I.

TWILL make sore shipwreck of my peace,
If soon this shower does not cease;
It rained last night, and now again
To-day does nothing else but rain.
I didn't go last night at nine,
Thinking to-day it might be fine.
What will my sweetheart say and do
If I should miss this evening, too?

II.

I'm sure the weather office clerk
Is not aware what serious work
He makes of week-end assignments
To meet our sweethearts or relations
(Though we may disappoint our kin)
And not regard it as a sin
When he the water tap turns on
Till all our holiday is gone.

III.

Why don't he let it rain on Monday,
Instead of Saturday and Sunday ?—
The days that factory folk desire
With ease and freedom to respire,
Instead of being shut indoors,
Watching the endless stream that pours
Adown the slates and window panes,
And wondering why it always rains.

IV.

Perhaps to please the washerwomen
My courting prospects he is dimmin';
They'd rather it should rain all Sunday
Than interfere with them on Monday,
Because their hearts begin despairing
To think they cannot finish charing,
And hang their stock of clothes to dry,
If clouds are hanging in the sky.

V.

Well, then, suppose it rains on Friday—
But that would make the house untidy ;
The wet, from shoes and garments dropping,
Dulls dusted chairs, and muds the mopping.
Yet better on the latter day
Than Sunday, or on Saturday ;
For if on Friday it should rain,
There still is time to clean again.

VI.

If he would only be so lenient
As to consult when most convenient,
There would not many be complaining
Were Tuesday set apart for raining ;
Only the shopmen at the stores,
Who every Tuesday close their doors,
And they might fix another day
On which to take their weekly play.

VII.

Wednesday, you know, would never do,
For then the bands play at Belle Vue ;
Thursday as well would pass unpleasantly
If it were showering incessantly ;
That is the holiday for drapers,
As you will know who read the papers,
And they in numbers far surpass
All the co-operative class.

VIII.

However, let it rain away
Just when it will, and when it may,
Providing it is dry on my days—
The two which follow after Fridays—
For little care I whom it vexes
If but the flower of the sexes
Have always favourable weather
When they go walking out together.





WHERE I FIRST MET MY WIFE.

I.



MET her not beneath the shade
By stately oak and beeches made,
Nor, as the gloam of evening fell,
Returning from the village well;
Nor ever rescued her from danger,
Then won her heart, although a stranger.

II.

In none of these romantic ways
Met I the lady whom I praise,
In none of these my fortune lay,

But in a less pretentious way ;
For I have never had a chance
Of shining in the gay romance.

III.

Cooped as I was from morn to eve
Watching a pair of powerlooms weave,
And sucking shuttles all the day
Though nearly choked with China clay,
How could a man in my condition
Have a romantic disposition ?

IV.

No, it was in the weaving shed—
As by the jobber she was led
The mistress of the looms to be
Which stood the very next to me
That first I met my darling wife,
The joy and comfort of my life.

V.

Now, as these looms had long been stopped—
No weaver coming to be “shopped”—
There was a deal to do before
They ran as smoothly as of yore,
And I my best assistance gave
That she her unpaid time might save.

VI.

I oiled the wheels, the yarn I stretched,
I pieced the healds, the weft I fetched :
And gratefully she, in return,
Gave me a look that made me burn
So much that, ere the looms could start,
She was enthroned within my heart.

VII.

From then my courting days begun,
But months elapsed before I won ;

For she was modest to a fault,
And long withstood my bold assault,
But yielded when she proved me true,
As every gentle maid should do.

VIII.

And now no lord of high degree
Can show a fairer wife than she ;
No children has he in his care
Who can at all with mine compare,
In whose red cheeks and glistening eyes
A world of gold and silver lies.

IX.

For their loved mother is no friend
To what is called the "Grecian bend,"
No high-heeled shoes her insteps crimp
To make the "Alexandra limp,"

Nor, that her ankle you may view,
Lifts she her skirt above her shoe.

X.

Nor is she even tightly laced,
That she may show a wasp-like waist,
But in a loose and flowing dress
Exhibits natural loveliness,
And trips about my little room
Like sunshine banishing the gloom.





MY LITTLE GODSON, HERBERT.

I.

NEATH a counterpane of flowers and a
coverlet of clay,

Lying dormant till the breaking of the great eternal
day,

In a most substantial building, one that seldom needs
repair,

But keeps in safe confinement all that ever enter there ;
In that thickly-peopled city, where you only hear the
sound

Of the rustling skirts of Autumn as they trail along
the ground ;

In the thickly-peopled city of the silent peaceful dead,
My little godson, Herbert, sleeps in his narrow bed.

II.

No more comes he to meet me when he sees me in the
lane,

On my way to spend an evening with his elder sister
Jane ;

No more brings he his money-box, and holds it while
I drop

A contribution in it through the opening at the top.

The prattling tongue is silent, that so often would
declare,

“ Joe Beyguss ” bought the “ pinny ” that he loved
so well to wear ;

And the sparkling eye is darkened that so brightly
gleamed with joy,

When a thoughtful friend presented him with an
amusing toy.

III.

In the circle which he brightened, and the home
wherein he dwelt,

A gloomy darkness settles, and an aching void is felt ;
For, though I miss him greatly, there are those to
whom his loss

Means a more enduring sorrow, and a greater, heavier
cross.

It is these that need consoling, and I pray to heaven
to grant

To the suddenly bereaved the consolation that they
want ;

That with Christian resignation they may yield their
little son


To the Father who has claimed him, saying, " Lord,
Thy will be done."





NEAW AW'M A MARRIED MON.

I.

HEN mi faythur fust wur wed,
A cheer, un a stoo',

A table, un a bed,

Wur reckont things enoo ;

Bu' neaw it costs so mich

A heawse o' goods to get

That if you arno' rich

Yo're foret to run i' debt.

II.

Yo' happen think it low

This marryin' short o' brass,

Un mi yed desarves a jow

For bein' sich an ass ;

Bu' seven i' every eight,

I' these days ut we're amung,

If they'r'n bund to marry streight,

Wudno' ha' to marry yung.

III.

They'd ha' to scheme un scrape,

Till they'd gettum yallow skins,

Till ther shooters lost ther shape,

Un ther noses toucht ther chins ;

Bu' me un my yung woife

One another loikt too mich

To waste th' best yers o' loife

I' waitin' whoile wer'n rich,

IV.

Un as hoo's a factory lass,
Un me a factory lad,
We'n noather on us brass—
Aw nobbu' weesh we had ;
Soa we'st booath ha' to work,
Un it wudno' be so fair
If aw began to shirk,
Un didno' do mi share.

V.

Soo aw'st help to mop un stone,
Help to scrub un skeawr,
Un do everythin' aw'm shown,
If it lies within mi peawer ;
Fur, neaw I aw'm a married mon,
Aw'm beawn to be soa good,
Un do the best aw con
To be o' a husbant should,

VI.

Aw reckon aw'st ha' t' rock,

Un larn t' mak cinder tay,

At three or four o'clock,

When it's happens breakin' day

Un other odds un ends,

Sich as hurryin' eawt foot whot,

When a loife or two depends

Upo' foindin' Dr. Scott.

VII.

Well, if trouble cooms wi' woives,

Pleasure cooms as weel,

To leetun warty loives,

Un mak us happy feel;

Un aw've awlws yerd it sed,

Bi thoose aw think should know,

That we owtno' trouble dread,

For th' pleasure pays for o'.

VIII.

Aw know ther's lots to do

Before we safely float,

But we'st manage if we poo

Together in one boat ;

Un aw dummo' feel a deawt

But fro' danger we'st be screen'd,

Very soon be cawt,

Un never look beheend.

IX.

Soa we'll tak things as they coom

Wi' an undaunted pluck,

Un awlus be awhoam

To every sooart o' luck ;

Never wear a freawn,

Or drink fro' sorrow's cup,

Whether up i'th wo'ld or deawn,

Whether deawn i'th wo'ld or up.

X.

If we hanno' th' wo'ld i' bants,

We'n faith enoof t' believe

We'st nare ha' mony wants

That we hanno' means t' relieve;

Soa aw'll finish for this toime,

But, as shure as aw'm a mon,

Tell yo' sum day else, i' rhyme,


Heaw mi woife un me gan on.





'T WAS OFTEN SAID.

I.

 WAS often said, when I got wed,
By some that thought they knew me,
That I, ere long, would end my song,
Since marriage might undo me ;
Yet, strange to tell, though I and Nell,
Are registered life's partners.
I have not yet the mishap met
Foretold by my disheart'ners.

II.

Nor can I see why it should be
As these false prophets stated ;
Is not the bird as often heard
When with another mated ?
The downy nest that warms his breast,
And love's sweet bliss he singeth ;
And I, as well, the joys can tell
That matrimony bringeth.

III.

And as, at night, the gas we light
Seduces into singing—
Thinking its ray the light of day—
Birds in their cages swinging ;
Though for a while no sun beguile,
But all be dark and gloomy,
Fortune shall find she, though unkind,
To silence cannot doom me.

IV.

If love abide at my fireside,
Then from the hearthstone altar
My voice shall rise, and not in sighs,
But songs that never falter ;
For, though a cloud the sun enshroud
If love's warm rays are shining,
Come foul, come fair, I'll not despair,
Or e'er be heard repining.





WARK UN WEDDIN NARE AGREEN.

I.

QH, it wary, wary wark,
Working daily after dark ;
Spendin' o yor honeymoon
In a reawm ut's loike an oon.
Heaw mich noicer 'twould ha' bin,
If aw'd savt a lot o tin,
So's aw met ha' ta'en mi broide
Off a pleasin' to th' sayside.

II.

Up to neaw aw never knew
 What a chap wi' brass met do :
 Never caret a single cent
 Heaw it coom or heaw it went ;
 But aw've lately rued some oft,
 When aw've thowt heaw aw've bin soft,
 Lettin' chances slip away
 O' providin' for this day.

III.

Still, thank God, altho' aw'm poor,
 Love can poverty endure,
 Baneesh every care away,
 Turn the darkest neet to day ;
 Makkin' loife the whul yer reawnd,
 By troo couples, to be feawnd
 In December, as in Joon,
 An unendin' honeymoon.

IV.

Yet it's hard when th' woife's awhoam,
Waitin', waitin' till you coom,
Whoile the heawrs, wi' idle feet,
Slowly, slowly bring on neet;
Thinkin' heaw you could ha' gon,
Loike an independent mon,
Anywheer ut yo met choose,
'Stid o' spinmin' 32's.

V.

Ever since the day aw're wed
Wark's bin gradely knockt on th' yed;
Whoile before it pleasure gave,
Neaw aw think ut aw'in a slave.
Aw've a theawsant hanks less in
Than aw're ever uset to spin,
For aw—though as willin', mark—
Conno' saddle to mi wark.

VI.

O mi thowts are fixt wi' proide,
On mi fair and bleeshin' broide ;
On the sweetener of mi loife,
On mi yung un bloomin' woife.
O mi thowts on her are fixt,
And, refusin' to be mixt,
Baneesh every other sort
That fro morn to neet aw cort.

VII.

When a twistbant roves aw feel
Very far fro' bein' weel,
Un loike th' chap, go " wur un wur,"
Shoul a " sawney " too occur.
Un aw'm sorely at a loss
If a lung strap rips across,
For, when theese misfortins coam,
O mi wits are noan awhoam.

VIII.

Soa aw'm shure to piece th' bant crost,
Till th' reet road gets gradely lost,
Or else shorten it till won
Conno' get the begger on;
Whoile, at puttin' straps on th' drum,
Aw've begun to act so num
It's a mericle aw'm laft,
Un noan takkun up by th' shaft.

IX.

Why, it's only yesterday,
Doffin' in a blunderin' way,
That aw started short o' strap,
Causin' every end to snap;
Un wi' havin' t' woind um on,
Welly hawve-on-heawr wur gon
Ere aw geet um piect, un then
Did the very same agen.

X.

Dunno' laaf, aw pray yo' foke,
For yo'n foind ut it's no joke,
If too poor to have a spree,
Yo spend th' honeymoon loike me;
Un this useful lesson larn
That the moral o' mi yarn
Maks it plainly to be seen
"Wark un weddin nare agreen."





BLIGHTED LOVE.

I.

QUONCE in his time 'tis given to man to know
The joys of heaven while journeying below ;
Once in his time to sinful man 'tis given
To catch, like Christian, just a glimpse of heaven.
That heavenly joy, I felt its warmth impart
To raise and cheer my weak desponding heart ;
That glimpse of heaven came brightening on my view
When she I loved vowed that she loved me too,

II.

Happy the man who from his brightest day
Can borrow light to last him all his way ;
Happy indeed ! but deep is his despair
Whose prospects, like a mirage, melt in air.
One finds in all the scenes that round him rise
A semblance to his homestead greets his eyes ;
The other plods across an arid plain,
And never hopes for fields and groves again.

III.

A pioneer of a pilgrim band,
'Tis mine to enter in the promised land,
And then, unwillingly, my steps retrace
To give descriptions of the heavenly place.
And oh ! the agonising thought is mine,
Though I point others to the land divine,
Like Adam driven from Eden, I may yearn,
Yet find no way by which I may return.



LINES WRITTEN AFTER MY WIFE'S
DEATH.

I.

THERE'S an isle in eternity's sea
Of a mild and congenial clime,

But ere we can residents be

We must sail down the channel of Time ;
Until we are scuttled at last

By a broadside that riddles our hull,
From a ship that displays at the mast
The flag of the cross-bones and skull.

II.

No darkness eclipses the day,

No hurricane ruffles the air,

No sickness can seize on its prey,

No partings are spoken of there ;

Yet such is the dread of a change,

Though better for those it concerns,

To live in this limited range

The mind of mortality yearns.

III.

But I, when the voyage is o'er,

And I see the black pirate descend,

Shall think not of hugging the shore

But meet him like meeting a friend ;

Content to accept his convoy

To the isle in eternity's sea ;

And hail his approaching with joy

Instead of attempting to flee.

IV.

Friend, listen, and though I may wince,

I'll give you a reason for this

That I think will not fail to convince

That my feelings are far from amiss :

I'll spin you the yarn of my cruise

Along with the good ship "Jane Ann,"

Then, if you don't yield to my views,

Ye're more or I'm less than a man.

V.

I was coasting about in life's bay,

On the look-out for something to pass,

When I sighted, one morning in May,

A ship with the aid of my glass ;

And noting as how she was strange,

While wondering what boat she might be,

I thought, for the sake of a change,

I'd run down and speak her, d'ye see.

VI.

No sooner resolved in my mind
Than I ported the helm and away,
And though a long distance behind
Directly alongside her lay ;
And then what a beauty I saw—
But there I suppose 'twas my luck,
I couldn't find in her a flaw
And she breasted the waves like a duck.

VII.

She'd a fine figurehead at the fore—
A saint in the posture of prayer—
And a peaceful expression it wore
Of faith in God's fatherly care ;
And she said in reply to my hail,
That, if grace could be constantly given,
Though from the port Sin she made sail
She meant to cast anchor in Heaven,

VIII.

Well, you see, I was taken aback,
Such thoughts had ne'er entered my head,
For as yet I'd been shaping my track
To the harbour of Pleasure instead ;
But I saw such a joy in her face,
When she spoke of the haven in view,
That on weighing the claims of the case
For that port I signed articles too.

IX.

And the long and the short of it all
Is this, that a bargain was made
To try to keep well within call
And rely on each other for aid ;
And, perhaps, if the truth could be told,
There's not been a happier pair
Since the world was a century old
Than me and my consort then were,

X.

But, alas ! at the end of one moon,

In the morning a sail hove in sight,
Which bombarded my darling at noon

And sunk her completely by night :
It was steered by the skeleton "Death,"

While the imps of "Disease" were the crew,
And that's why I say I shall welcome the day
When the pirate comes after me too.





SWEETS TO THE SWEET.

I.

“**S**WEETS to the sweet”



In rich profusion strew,
Where she lies sleeping at your feet,
Beneath the churchyard yew.
She loved to see them grow,
Then strew her grave with flowers ;
The purest emblems that we know
Of this brief life of ours.

II.

Ye maidens, hither bring
The tender flowers that wave
Their heads above the grass in spring,
And strew them on her grave.
Peace to my widowed breast
Invoking with a prayer,
For, with the woman it loved best,
My heart lies buried there.

III.

My heart lies buried there,
And in its place instead,
From Sorrow's crucible, Despair
Has cast me one of lead;
Which Grief has graven deep,
Never to be removed,
With what oft causes me to weep,
The face of my beloved.

IV.

Not as I saw it lie

Before her form was hid

For ever from my lingering eye,

Under the coffin lid—

The cap upon her brow,

The shroud beneath her chin,

I do not see that horror now,

The grave has closed it in.

V.

But on my heart's dead weight,

Distinctly I can trace,

Like etchings on a copperplate,

The outlines of a face,

Which memory has annealed

With hues of life and health,

Until her portrait stands revealed

In all its beauteous wealth.

VI.

Her eyes with love-light shine,
As first they shone when I
Said, "Dearest, now that you are mine,
Misfortune we defy."
Ah ! little did I know,
When that fond whisper crossed
My lips a few short weeks ago,
How soon she would be lost.

VII.

Upon her features glows
The colour of the south,
And when she laughs, sweet music flows
Out of her dainty mouth ;
While dimples on each cheek,
And one upon the chin,
Like children playing hide-and-seek,
Keep popping out and in.

VIII.

This picture does not fade,
And will not wear away
But show the image of the maid
More clearly every day.
In all things else the same,
Sink deeper by degrees,
Like the initials of a name
Cut on the bark of trees.

IX.

Its frame may battered be,
And age its gilt begrime,
And yet the likeness shall not see
One blemish made by Time.
But kept with jealous care,
As long as life remains,
Be always young and always fair,
And always free from stains.

X.

Away with earth, away,
It cannot now delight ;
I seem to see her all the day,
And dream of her all night,
This thought alone can cheer,
That I, when souls arise,
Though parted from my mistress here,
May meet her in the skies.





HOPE AND RESIGNATION.

I.



WHEN the sun in spring beams
Upon the glad earth,

Very bright are the flowers ;

Yet more bright are the dreams

Our ambition gives birth,

In life's vernal hours ;

For we have not yet learned

That the scene may be turned,

And the dark side be shown,

But look forward with joy,

Thinking nought can destroy

Plans of our own.

O! bright are the days
When we hopefully gaze
On futurity's flowers,
And are not aware
They bloom much too fair
To ever be ours.

II.

Still, though life's spring flies,
And summer departs,
And fade all the flowers
That gladdened our eyes
And delighted our hearts
In youth's sunny hours ;
Though life's autumn, so sere,
Brings no grain in the ear,
Nor harvest to reap ;
Though life's winter at last,
With its pitiless blast,
Makes us wish for death's sleep,

Its lowering skies,
That quell hopes that would rise
Of a brighter to-morrow,
Shall not make us despair,
But resignedly bear
Our life-load of sorrow.





ADVERSITY.

I.



WHEN comes across thy boat an adverse wave,
Let the misfortune find thee calm and brave ;
Instead of sitting idly, take the helm
And face the surge that threatens to o'erwhelm ;
For, if thou fightest nobly with thy foe,
Admiring Fortune shall not say thee no,
But on thy efforts such rich favours rain,
As craven hearts may wish, but never gain :

The furnace only can the gold refine,
Therefore, who bears it best shall brightest shine :
Then prove thy worth when Fortune frowneth hard,
And soon her smiles shall all thy toil reward.

II.

If men for ever sailed o'er placid seas,
Where tempests never raged to mar their ease,
The hardy virtues in our seamen bred
By battling with the storm would ne'er be fed :
For, as lies latent in the flinty stone
The spark that can be struck by steel alone,
So genius, which might ever hide its rays,
Adversity can rouse into a blaze.
Then murmur not when dangerous currents flow,
And make it hard thy little boat to row,
The storm once weathered, surely thou hast learned
How sweet is rest that has been nobly earned !



THE SNOWS OF AGE.

I.



WITHIN the upper storey of a mill,
With elbows leaning on the window sill,
I stand, and see the snowflakes skimming past,
Like butterflies, and settling down at last—
As silently upon the earth alight
The downy feathers from the wing of night—
Attiring her in wedding garments fair,
And hanging orange blossoms in her hair.

II.

Fall, fall, ye flakes, in quick succession fall,
And drape the earth with snowy winter shawl,
Keep warm the seeds of life that latent lie
Deep in her breast—they'll blossom by and by;
And you, ye snows of age, that on my head
Your blanching honours prematurely shed,
Oh! make the germs of immortality
Meet for the great eternal Spring to be.





THE OLD MAN AT THE GRAVE OF
HIS YOUNG WIFE.

I.

AS where once flourished many a stately tree,
O'er which an equal tale of years had passed,
One stands alone upon a blighted lea,
The sole survivor of the wintry blast,
I stand alone, a sere and withered trunk,
Bent nearly double by the weight of years,
Above the graves to which my friends have sunk,
Watering my wife's mossed tombstone with my
tears.

II.

As falls at last the one remaining tree

That bound the present to the days of yore,

I, too, must fall, but none will weep for me

As I weep now for her I'm bending o'er.

The hands that put me in my narrow bed,

And hide me with earth's damp and mouldy sheet,

Will never raise a stone above my head,

Will never plant a floweret at my feet.

III.

Enough for me, if, when I'm laid away,

They neatly readjust the broken sward,

Where dormant in my dwelling house of clay

I wait the second coming of the Lord.

Enough for me, if, when the trumpet blows,

And earth reveals the secrets of her breast,

The lone old man his long-lost mistress knows,

And enters with her in eternal rest.



YOUR VOICES HAVE A PLEASANT RING.

I.



OUR voices have a pleasant ring,
Your limbs are strong and supple ;
Join in the dance, laugh, shout, and sing,
Each merry-hearted couple.
Laugh, shout, and sing, the whole day long,
Each happy youth and maiden ;
For, oh, refreshing is your song
To hearts with sorrow laden.

II.

Deny not that youth is the age
For joyfulness and jollity ;
Leave to the old grey-headed sage
Moods of a calmer quality ;
And at the proper place and time,
When in the vine-clad valleys,
The precious grapes, while rich and prime,
Press into pleasure's chalice.

III.

For higher up the frowning hill
The wind commences blowing,
And soon the air becomes so chill
There is no vintage growing,
Save in some sweet and sheltered nook,
That lets but little wind in,
Which few, though many for it look,
Are fortunate in finding.

IV.

It is as sweet to hear your mirth

Come floating up the mountain

As, in a time of drought and dearth,

The bubbling of a fountain ;

For while our souls your joyful song

Are eagerly imbibing,

Scenes of the past upon us throng,

Which memory stands describing.

V.

Again we tread on childhood's plains—

Re-enter youth's warm valley—

Ambition coursing through our veins ;

Up, up the hill side sally,

Sing the light-hearted song once more,

Join in the laughing chorus,

And waken when the dream is o'er,

With wintry heights before us.

VI.

The time is drawing very nigh

When my cold form must fill a

White shroud of snow, and I shall lie

Upon an icy pillow ;

But till I drop into the drift

Each step is nearer bringing,

The darkness from my pathway lift,

And cheer me with your singing.





GOD BLESS THEE, FAYTHER KESMUS!

I.



OD bless thee, Fayther Kesmus ! coam

Insoide, un mak' thisel' awhoam ;

For, though aw'm nobbu very poor,

Aw'm fain to see thy frosty yure ;

Un, coam whatever may to me,

Will never turn my back o' thee ;

Fur he's no Englishman at winnor

Invoice thee in to ha' thy dinner.

II.

Neaw dunno let me be denoide,
But lay thi cloak un cap asoide ;
Un durn't on eeremony dally,
But sit thee down, un fill thy bally.
'There's lecon beef, ut's noice and sweet,
Un lots o' fat to swallow wi' it ;
Sum gravy, un a maly tater,
Besoide a point o' sparklin' wayter.

III.

Me co' that liquor ? Aye, aw do ;
Un th' best ut aw cun furnish too ;
Aw've turned teetotal neaw, owd chum !
Un soa theaw mur'nt expect t' ha' rum.
'Theaw's had enoof o' rum un roit ;
Aw'll feed thee on another diet,
Before theaw gets me in disgrace
Wi' thy red nose un pimpelt face.

IV.

Ah ! sin' we fost shoke honds together
Aw've past throo diffrent soarts o' weather.
My limbs are stark, my blood runs cowder,
Bu' theaw's noan groon a minit owder.
Though seventy toimes theaw's bin to see
Me sin' i' th' nuss's lap aw lee ;
Un summut says aw'st noan be here
When next theaw coams to bless and cheer.

V.

As nob'dy knows as weel us thee
Whot miseries han bin borne by me ;
Let's tawk abeawt owd toimes agen,
Un whot theaw seed me suffer then ;
Un mak' thoose fellies wait a bit
Whot hanno gettun word to flit,
Whoile fro' ther restless graves we raise
The ghosts ov lung-departed days.

VI.

Whot's this at coams before mi een?
A reawm drest up wi' evergreen—
A lot o' silly lads un wenches—
Some sittin' upo' th' wall side benches—
Some caporin' woildly deawn the middle
To th' playin' of a flute un fiddle,
Un kissin' under th' misletoe
Thoose ut they loikun best ov o'.

VII.

Another Kesmus Day appears!
A day remembered oft wi' tears.
Aw see mi little sweetheart, May,
Ut fost aw kisst that Kesmus Day,
Un seem to yer her tell her mother
“Awst happen never see another;
Fur ere Owd Kesmus coams once moor, mother,
Aw think aw'st be wi' angels pure, mother.”

VIII.

As recollection carries back
Mi moind deawn memory's trodden track,
Aw see a weak and wasted loife,
Un o' becose aw lost my woife.
Aw hadno' hawve the heart to stroive
As whot aw had when hoo're aloive ;
Un loike a felly in a dreeom,
Felt fooret to goo alung wi' th' streeom.

IX.

Aw've nobbut had won faithful friend
Ut has no' left me to mi end.
Theaw's seen me in mi humble cot
Repoinin' o'er mi dreary lot ;
Theaw's yerd mi weak, desparin' groan
When poorly, wretched, un alone,
Un travelt fur nur aw con tell
To keep mi cumpuny thisel'.

X.

Whot ! gettin' reddy to be gone ?

Here, have another staeake owd mon !

Well, if theaw thinks theaw's had enoof,

Bestow a blessin' on my roof ;

Bestow a blessin' everywheer,

But, oh, particularly heer !

That when aw miss thi phizog merry

Aw'st noan forget thee in a hurry.





CRUMBS OF COMFORT.

LINES ADDRESSED TO MR. AND MRS. J. BURGESS
ON HEARING OF THEIR MARRIAGE.

(BY DAVID LAWTON.)

I.



HAPPY may your union be,
From all strife and bickering free ;
May the light of love divine
Ever on your pathway shine.
Let each be of each a part ;
Let each know the other's heart ;
Mutual confidence will prove
Surest seal to wedded love.

II.

Now that you your lives have joined,
Be ye of one heart and mind ;
Each the other's burdens bear—
Love can lighten every care.
With the bridegroom and the bride
May the Father's love abide,
And life's way together trod
Be a pilgrimage to God.





IN MEMORIAM.

(BY EDWIN WRIGHT.)

I.

SEE her in her bridal dress,
As beauteous as a flower
That rarely blooms within this clime
For more than one short hour ;
I see her from the altar led,
Where smiles her smiles repay,
And many a loving heart is there
To cheer her on her way.

* * * * *

II.

I heard them speak of her once more ;
 “ She’s fading fast,” they said,
And then they brought the mournful tale
 And told me she was dead.
I thought of him whose noble heart
 Had won that tender flower,
But, in the faintest breath of frost,
 Had lost it in an hour.

III.

I saw them lay her gently down
 Into her narrow bed,
While many a troubled heart drew round,
 And many a tear was shed.
One placid face to heaven was turned,
 As if he saw her there,
Arrayed in robes of snowy white,
 Safe in her Saviour’s care.



LINES

WRITTEN FOR MY FRIEND MR. J. BURGESS DURING
HIS BEREAVEMENT.

(BY DAVID LAWTON.)

I.

SHE'S gone! my other self is gone! and I,
Alas! am left alone in grief to sigh:

Yet not alone, for He who took away

My loved one hence will be my help and stay.

Although we are awhile asunder riven,

This tie of earth is now a tie to heaven.

We're parted! but she's only gone before,

To watch and wait for me on yon bright shore.

II.

A short and pleasant while we trod life's way ;
Our wedded bliss—alas ! how brief its stay ;
But yonder soon we both may have the rest
And bliss of those whom God through Christ
hath blest.

Oh ! Thou who gav'st, and Thou who took'st away,
Give me the grace I need, that I may say
“ Thy will be done,” and kiss Thy chastening rod,
And humbly own it is Thy hand, my God.





THE POET'S VISION.

(BY JAMES BARNES.)

I.



WEARY with all the labours of the day,

When evening chased the fading light away,
Young Vincent sought, amid the deepening gloom,
The sacred silence of his little room ;
And there before a slowly sinking fire,
Where, one by one, the embers spent, expire,
His slender form upon a couch he flung,
To dream of her of whom of yore he sung.

II.

Stretched at his ease, his mind was soon at rest,
And calmly heaved his much-afflicted breast,
Within which beat a heart as fond and true
As e'er a passion for a woman knew.
But ah ! that heart had lost the treasured flower
Which bloomed to him the richest in life's bower,
Just as he bore it from its virgin bed,
Beneath his roof its fragrance sweet to shed.

III.

He slumbered long ; and lo ! in fancy stole
Soft in the presence of his lofty soul
A lovely form, with features all a-glow,
And robed in garments white as mountain snow ;
And on her head she wore a crown of gold,
Such as we ne'er on mortal brows behold,
Begemmed with diamonds of such hue and worth,
Surpassing far the value of the earth !

IV.

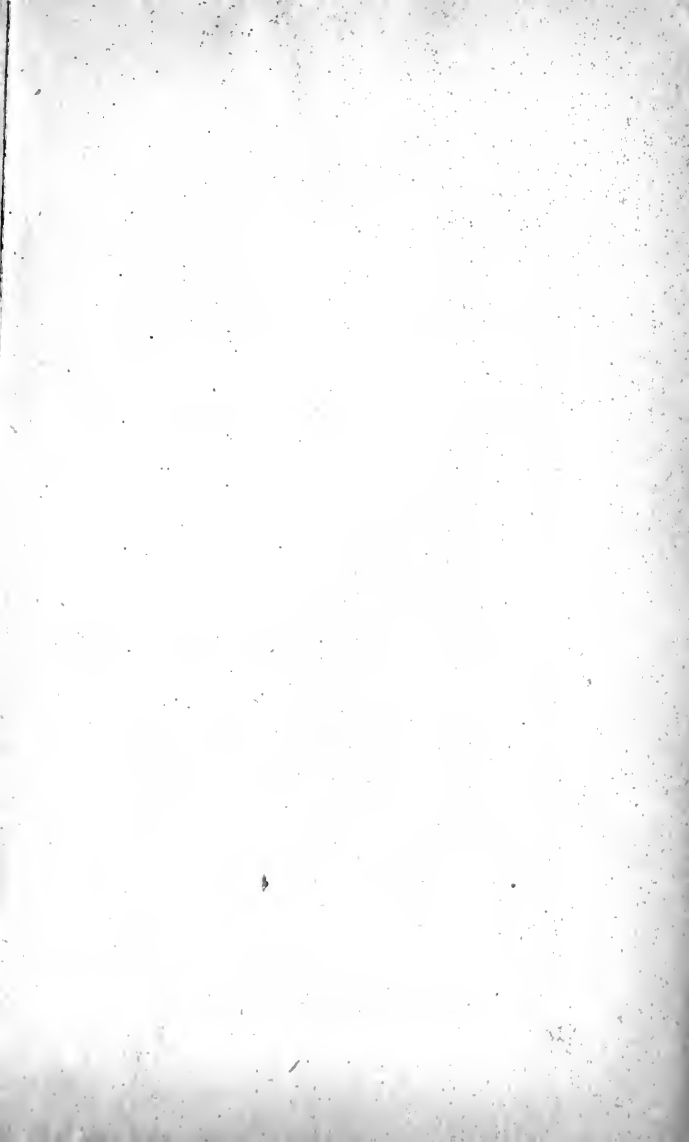
In admiration eagerly he gazed,
While brighter still her outward glories blazed,
For well he knew, and loved it quite as well,
That angel form which, like a magic spell,
Thus held his spirit in its welcome thrall,
Nor, though a prisoner, did his bondage pall,
As oft before, as partner and as bride,
That apparition had wandered by his side.

V.

At length it fled ; but oftentimes at will
It steals as softly in his chamber still,
And gilds his slumbers like the moon's pale light,
Which shines effulgent on the throne of night.
When o'er the bosom of the quiet sky
A million brilliant stars wide scattered lie ;
And thus, by strong imagination led,
The living hold communion with the dead.







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